The Common Core State Standards [CCSS] in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects represent an extraordinary opportunity to provide students, regardless of personal circumstance or where they attend school, with world class skills needed for success in post-secondary education and career. The CCSS will be taught in all Idaho public schools in 2013-14, and the standards will be assessed in the spring of 2015. Here are some concrete steps that can be taken right now to further the cause of implementation and integration of the common core in your Idaho classrooms and schools.

1. English Language Arts/Literacy: Increasing the level of text complexity in the classroom K-12, employing text dependent questioning in instruction, and having students write about these complex texts form the heart of the shifts in ELA/Literacy. Explore the new definition of text complexity and begin to strengthen the level of text complexity and incorporate test dependent questioning into instruction and assessment across content areas. Student ability to provide specific and relevant evidence from text and sources will figure heavily in the new assessment being developed by the Smarter-Balanced Consortium [SBAC]. This assessment will be operational in Idaho in the spring of 2015.

   See pages 2-16 in the CCSS ELA and Literacy Appendix A:

   http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/common/english/docs/ELA%20%20Appendix_A.pdf

   See "Best Practices 2012 Text Complexity Resources:

   http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/common/ELAcore/proDev.htm

2. Every student writing every day should be the goal. Begin to have staff embed and weave routine writing assignments into instruction across all content areas. These assignments should ask students to read and analyze complex texts or sources, research effectively, collaborate, and create material that integrates source

information to be presented in written and oral form. Idea: Establish and/or bolster existing district or school wide writing instruction at each grade and across content areas. Idea: Consider establishing district- wide or school-wide testing of writing about what is read where all teachers are trained to score student work to a consistent set of rules or rubric. This elevates the seriousness of the effort and builds needed capacity in your staff to support instructional change. Start with a few grades and incrementally build it up to encompass all grades. IDEA: Use SBAC sample items in the classroom [see # 7 below] to help develop authentic anchor responses for training and scoring.

NOTE: The SBAC assessment, operational in spring 2015, will require students to write about what they read, view or hear at every tested grade [grades 3-8 and 11.] What best exemplifies the depth and complexity of expectation on the new SBAC test? The Performance Tasks. These come complete with rubrics or sets of rules for scoring. Many sample items, Performance Tasks included, are available at this link:

http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/

3. Mathematics: Understand and become knowledgeable with the shifts in the CCSSM.
   Shift #1: FOCUS STRONGLY WHERE THE STANDARDS FOCUS
   Not only do we have a narrower list, but, just as important, we are also deepening expectations. So rather than superficially skating through a lot of topics – covering the curriculum - we are going to have fewer topics on our list, but the expectations in those topics are much deeper. Focus gives us time to go to a deeper level of understanding and expect more, of more students.

   http://vimeo.com/album/1702025/video/29568179

   Shift #2: COHERENCE: THINK ACROSS GRADES, AND LINK TO MAJOR TOPICS WITHIN GRADES
   In the second shift of coherence, we take advantage of focus to actually pay attention to sense-making in math. Coherence speaks to the idea that math does not consist of a list of isolated topics; rather it carefully connects the learning within and across grades so that students can build new understanding on foundations built in previous years.

The Standards themselves, and therefore any resulting curriculum and instruction, should build on major concepts within a given school year as well as major concepts from previous grades.

Typically, current math curriculum spends as much as 25% of the instructional school year on review and re-teaching of previous grade level expectations – not as an extension – but rather as a re-teaching because many students have very little command of critical concepts.

A study of the standards demonstrates that there are areas of emphasis already engineered into the standards at each grade level.
http://vimeo.com/album/1702025/video/29568288

Shift #3: RIGOR: IN MAJOR TOPICS, PURSUE CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING, PROCEDURAL SKILL AND FLUENCY, AND APPLICATION
The CCSSM require a balance of solid conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application of skill in problem-solving situations. This shift is about the depth of what is expected in the standards, and also about what one should expect to see happening in the classroom, in curricular materials, and so on.

By conceptual understanding, the standards require that student understand math – not simply how to get the answers. In order to build on their knowledge and skills they need more than tricks. Again, with focus we now have time to attend to building understanding.

Additionally there are a few things at each grade level which students need to develop procedural skill and fluency – accurately and with ease. The typical example is knowing multiplication facts within 100 in 3rd grade. It is important to note that simply having that fluency without an understanding of the concept of multiplication is not sufficient.

The goal is that students are able to apply their understanding and procedural skills in mathematics to problem-solving situations. These are the rich tasks that have been often shared as capturing the expectations of the CCSS for mathematics. It is important to consider that an effective way for students to gain proficiency in problem solving situations is to support their understanding of concepts and procedural skills and fluency.
http://vimeo.com/album/1702025/video/29484364

4. Visit our Common Core Tool Box for the latest in resources and professional development in support of CCSS implementation:

   http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/common/

5. What's on the NEW test?

   The test development process of the Smarter-Balanced Assessment Consortium [SBAC] is completely transparent. To see what the expectations are for students in all grade levels and the many items types employed, visit this link to see sample items:

   http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/.

   To learn more about the test design, use these modules created to support teacher item writing and review activities:

   http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/item-writing-and-review/

6. **21st Century Exemplar Library of CCSS Aligned Lessons** – The SDE is partnering with a group of Master teachers around Idaho to create an exemplar library of 250 lessons/units. For an example of a CCSS aligned stellar lesson please use the attached screenshots to search for and view these sample exemplars.

   

   Quick Guide
   Exemplar Lesson Sear

   1. High School Exemplar Title: **Harlem Renaissance**
   2. Junior High School Exemplar Title: **Romeo & Juliet: Themes Introduction (Unit/Lessons 1-4)**
   3. Elementary Exemplar Title: **Cell City**

   Have teachers access and try out a CCSS aligned exemplar lesson/unit plans created this year by Idaho teachers and shared statewide on *Schoolnet*. Provide PLC time for teachers to debrief after trying out CCSS aligned lessons.

Note: This library of 250 lessons will be fully accessible and searchable online and posted within Schoolnet on October 1st.